Coretta King Urges Push For Full Employment

Post 8/19/77

Associated Press

Coretta Scott King said yesterday it is immoral to subject millions of Americans to the ravages of unemployment.

"Unemployment represents a form of oppression to those who suffer its impact," the widow of Martin Luther King Jr. said.

"Beyond its obvious economic consequences, it serves to harm family and community life and contributes to a loss of confidence and hope, increased anxiety, alcoholism and mental illness."

Mrs. King spoke at a joint news conference with Murray H. Finley, president of the AFL-CIO Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union.

Both said they had hoped President Carter would make a more visible effort to speak out for legislation and other measures to assure full employment.

Speaking of the administration, Mrs. King said "I can't say it's doing all that needs to be done . . . I am very hopeful."

Mrs. King and Finley are heading a drive for Full Employment Week, Sept. 4-10, in which a coalition of nearly three dozen union, religious, civic and other groups plans to conduct hearings, vigils, demonstrations, petition drives and parades.

The call to action has been signed by more than 100 prominent figures, including Govs. Jerry Apodaca of New Mexico, Edmund G. (Jerry) Brown Jr. of California, Hugh L. Carey of New York and Milton J. Shapp of Pennsylvania.

Sponsors of the drive are campaigning for legislation which they say would lower the unemployment rate to 3 per cent without adding to inflation.

Mrs. King said the economic policies of the past few years have struck particularly hard at blacks.

"We are witnessing nothing less than repeal of the civil rights acts of the '60s and the gutting of the promises of justice," she said.

Both Mrs. King and Finley said the federal government cannot bear the complete responsibility, that the private sector must also do its part to create jobs.